

February 2014

The Center for Alternative Dispute Resolution Newsletter  
State of Hawaii, Judiciary



Center for Alternative  
Dispute Resolution  
Hawaii State Judiciary  
417 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Phone:  
808-539-4ADR (4237)

Fax:  
808-539-4416

E-mail:  
CADR@courts.hawaii.gov

Website:  
[www.courts.state.hi.us/cadr](http://www.courts.state.hi.us/cadr)

## *How to Say What You Don't Want to Say and Hear What You Don't Want to Hear*



Receiving and giving feedback can be challenging when correction is involved. Most of us don't want to criticize others and few of us welcome criticism. However, when problems need to be addressed and changes need to be made we must be open to presenting and hearing messages to set things right.

### When delivering the message:

- Be timely. Address the issue as soon as possible after it happens. Don't wait and don't stockpile several problems before finally discussing them.
- Focus on a specific action - "The report was four days late," *not* general personal traits - "You're always late."
- Remember feedback is for the benefit of the listener so be constructive. Feedback is not an opportunity to vent, complain about things that cannot be changed, or bring up past problems.
- Ask questions. Help the listener identify the cause of the problem and encourage examination of the process to bring about change.
- Make it almost a surprise. Provide complimentary and descriptive feedback consistently so feedback for correction will be part of a usual practice and not the only type of feedback you give.

### When hearing the message:

- Assess the context and the credibility. Did you request feedback? Is the speaker someone you trust or someone who gives unsolicited advice? Feedback from a trusted source is more likely to meet your needs.
- Determine if the message is based in reality or if it is simply an opinion. Not everyone sees the same event the same way and what one person finds upsetting may not bother others at all.
- Examine the tone. Is the message presented as an attack directed at you or does it describe your actions in a way that will help you to improve?
- Listen. Ask questions for clarification and seek guidance for change from those you trust.
- Learn to ask for feedback from those who can help you improve.